

**Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service  
National Advisory Committee Executive Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, October 22, 2014 – 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** W. G. “Bill” Kilgore, National Representative, AMVETS and Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

**Invocation:** The invocation was delivered by Colonel Charles Gallina, National Representative, Knights of Columbus.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The pledge was led by Emil Franz, National Representative, Marine Corps League.

**Chairman’s Opening Remarks:** Mr. Kilgore welcomed the members of the EC and expressed his personal gratitude for the correspondence he received on the passing of his father and during his wife’s illness. He then took a moment to recognize the death of NEC Vice Chairperson, Robert Hennings, National Representative, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (BPOE) and NEC Vice Chairperson. Stuart Israel, Deputy Representative, BPOE, elaborated on Mr. Hennings’ illness and commemorated his work with the Elks and on the NAC.

**Roll Call:** NEC attendance was duly recorded as follows:

	<u><b>Present (P)/ Absent (A)</b></u>	
The American Legion	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
American Red Cross	P	
AMVETS	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary		A
Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks	P	
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	P	
Forty and Eight	P	
Knights of Columbus	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars		A
Marine Corps League	P	
Masonic Service Association of North America	P	
Military Order of the Cootie	P	
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	P	
The Salvation Army	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.	P	

**VA and Other Staff Present:**

Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Service Office, VA Central Office

Sonja Brown, Chief, Voluntary Service and Public Affairs, New Mexico VA Healthcare System, Albuquerque, NM

Lorna Hatch, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Maine Healthcare System, Togus, ME

Mary Jo Munnelly, Lead Staff Assistant, Voluntary Service Office, VACO

Christine Feeser, Program Specialist, Voluntary Service Office, VACO

Anna Diehl, Chief, Community Resources/Public Affairs, Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics

Joe Dooley, Chief, Voluntary Service, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, MA

Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, Voluntary Service Office, VACO

Christopher Slawinski, Treasurer, James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board

**Goals and Objectives:** Mr. Kilgore presented the goals and objectives of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) EC meeting as listed in the meeting booklet:

1. Act as the governing body of the VAVS NAC in the interim period between Annual Meetings.
2. Be supportive of the NAC's primary objective of advising VA on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA facilities and matters relating to volunteerism.
3. Be apprised of programmatic issues pending within Voluntary Service and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Headquarters since the 2014 Annual Meeting and to hold discussion on any appropriate advisory actions necessary.
4. Plan EC supportive actions to ensure follow-up on issues or business items from the 2014 Annual Meeting.
5. Provide an opportunity for VAVS NAC EC to hear from and have face-to-face time with VA senior leadership.
6. Receive an update from the James H. Parke Memorial Foundation Board concerning the Youth Scholarship program.
7. Receive an update from VAVS Partners, Inc. concerning the Annual Meeting.
8. Assess the 2014 Annual Meeting, finalize plans for the 2015 Annual Meeting, and address site selection for the 2016 Annual Meetings.
9. Review and address submitted Recommendation intended for the 2015 Annual Meeting and prepare a report on same for all NAC National Representatives.

10. Receive reports from the: Recommendations Subcommittee, Volunteer of the Year Nomination Subcommittee, Recruitment Subcommittee, and Membership Subcommittee.
11. Update the NAC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as deemed necessary.
12. Discuss, as a group, any area within the VAVS program in need of additional progress.

**Additions/Revisions to Minutes of EC Meeting held April 2014:** Mr. Kilgore asked for additions or revisions to the minutes. Mr. Franz moved to accept the minutes as written; the motion was seconded by Del “Bulldog” Turner, National Representative, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc. **The motion carried.**

**VAVS-NAC Exec Board:** Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Service Office, introduced a proposal suggested by VISN liaisons on how VAVS could better collaborate with the EC and NAC. The NAC Annual Meeting has been the only opportunity for people in the field to meet with their NAC partners. A small working group convened to address the issue and created a proposal to incorporate a VAVS Executive Board as a consultative body to the VAVS NAC. Key VAVS staff and NAC EC members will form the 6-8 member board which will meet regularly to strategize and discuss VAVS and NAC operations and goals.

Joe Dooley, Chief, Voluntary Service, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, MA, and Anna Diehl, Chief, Community Resources/Public Affairs, Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics, presented the VAVS-NAC Executive Board Concept Summary Paper. Historical background was provided along with discussion of the recognition and training components that make the NAC unique from other FACAs. The transitions currently happening within VA leadership present an opportunity to make the NAC a more effective advisory committee than it has been in recent years. Secretary Robert A. McDonald has sought input from internal and external stakeholders on how to rebuild the VA; VAVS and the NAC should take this opportunity to emphasize the value that volunteers bring to Veterans and to VA and how they fit into VHA’s Strategic Plan and Blueprint for Excellence. VAVS will need to transform with VHA by upgrading technologies and collaborating more effectively. Under the proposal, a VISN Data Dashboard would be created to provide a snapshot of activity within a VISN and how it compares to other programs across the country. This tool would serve as the primary measurement of the impact of VAVS and would provide data in a format that is useful to Central Office. The board will explore ways of incorporating a recognition element into the metrics.

NAC and EC members should keep in mind that they are supposed to be advising VHA, not the other way around. VHA is to provide assistance to the Board in helping them provide viable recommendations to the Secretary on the overall care of Veteran patients.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed.)

**Review of 68<sup>th</sup> NAC Annual Meeting Evaluations:** Lorna Hatch, Chief, VA Maine Healthcare System & Meeting Planner, reviewed the evaluations from the 68<sup>th</sup> NAC Annual Meeting. 78% of respondents strongly agreed that the meeting met its stated objectives, 78% strongly agreed that it was well organized, and 74% strongly agreed that VAVS staff made an effort to resolve problems that arose. Overall, 62% of the respondents rated the meeting excellent while 29% rated it very good. 81% found the Health & Information Fair to be excellent or very good. Attendees appreciated the assignment card in their badges. Hotel facilities and staff were rated very favorably. Recommendations included getting better chairs and using a different colored backdrop.

The workshops were all rated very favorably, though a wide spectrum of comments were received. The materials were found to be helpful and handouts were requested when there are no visual aids. As with previous years, some respondents felt the meeting was aimed more to Chiefs and staff than the Representatives/Deputy Representatives. Recommendations for future meetings included a workshop presented by TCF interns, making acronyms available or having the presenter more mindful to spell acronyms out as they use them, using lapel microphones, presenting the most recent data, and ensuring workshop topics and descriptions are more accurate.

#### Future Annual Meeting Plans

Ms. Hatch discussed potential locations for the 2017 NAC Annual Meeting. VA Chiefs from San Antonio, Texas, and Bay Pines, Florida, have offered to host the NAC. Mr. Turner suggested considering Detroit, Michigan, as a possible location. Staff has a long list of requirements for any location and they are considered very critically. Preliminary information will be provided at the next NAC meeting.

**69th Annual Meeting Plans and Break Sponsorship:** Lorna Hatch presented a breakdown of the costs for break sponsorships for an estimated 300 attendees. At the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting there were about 245 total attendees, 45-50 being staff. Mr. Turner suggested foregoing the continental breakfast in favor of Members getting breakfast on their own.

- EC Meeting – AM Break: VAVS Partners, Inc.
- Thursday, 4/23 – AM Break: Military Order of the Purple Heart, Inc.
- Thursday, 4/23 – PM Break: AMVETS
- Friday, 4/24 – AM Break: Knights of Columbus
- Friday, 4/24 – PM Break: Paralyzed Veterans of America

Sponsors are greatly appreciated and table cards will be placed on the tables to identify them. If the number of attendees is significantly less than 300, a sponsor's money will either be applied elsewhere or credited back to the organization.

Sonja Brown, Chief, VAVS New Mexico Health Care System, Albuquerque, New Mexico expressed her excitement for hosting the NAC Annual Meeting. The Albuquerque Uptown Marriott and surrounding area are very nice. She is working on planning a Mariachi Night and will provide recommendations for the luncheon and dinner.

Christine Feeser, Program Specialist, VAVS, VACO and Meeting Planner, added that a shuttle is available to and from the airport for \$20 each way and the Marriott provides shuttle service within 5 miles of the hotel. Room rates are \$83.00 per night.

EC Members agreed that a buffet works best for the Parke Luncheon and a sit-down meal for the Closing Dinner. Volunteers will be available for anyone who may need assistance and priority will be given to any attendees in wheelchairs.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed.)

**VA Chief of Staff Remarks:** The Honorable Jose D. Riojas, VA Chief of Staff, introduced himself to the EC and reviewed his background. VA and Secretary McDonald are working very hard trying to rebuild trust and confidence from Veteran patients and taxpayers after the recent crisis. As the Department reorganizes, it hopes the Veterans it serves will come to see it as “My VA.” The NAC will be very useful in helping to shape what that means and how VA can serve as an integrated Department at a much lower level than it does currently.

Mr. Riojas discussed VA’s collaborative efforts preparing for the effective care of patients that may be admitted with the Ebola virus. Leadership has been visiting medical facilities around the country to identify which are the most capable of providing care for patients with Ebola and they have been working with National Nurses Union to ensure nurses are prepared and properly protected. VHA is working very hard to be seen as a national leader and source of expertise on post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, and other issues. Mr. Turner commented that some of the professionals coming into these fields are not prepared to address Veterans that have lost limbs or other functions and that it is important to bring people on to the care team that share some of their experiences. Mr. Riojas responded that this is a major part of their collaboration with DoD. 15 sites have started utilizing Veterans on care teams through this program and they hope to expand it to all sites. This provides training and an opportunity to improve their resumes while applying their knowledge and skills to help fellow Veterans.

Mr. Riojas discussed VA’s priorities of eliminating the backlog by the end of 2015, eliminating Veteran homelessness, increasing access, and reducing wait times. The Veterans Choice Act states that if a Veteran has to wait over 30 days or is more than 40 miles away from a VA facility, they will be able to seek healthcare from another provider. This means the VA will need to work very hard to ensure continuity of care.

They will continue the increasingly robust collaborative effort to develop the electronic health record system.

Kenneth Rose, Deputy National Representative, Vietnam Veterans of America, asked what the VA is doing about the individuals who were responsible for the recent crisis. Mr. Riojas responded that the VA is committed to developing sustained accountability and upgrading trust and integrity among the Veterans they serve. Many people think that as a result of the Veterans Choice Act, the VA has more ability to get rid of Senior Executive Service Officers that are not up to par. The only change the Act impacts in regard to this is that the appeal process for disciplinary action has been shortened. Additionally, the Merit System Protection Board requires that employees be given ample time to review and respond to an agency's case against them. During this time, nothing can be done to prevent employees from retiring with benefits, which are guaranteed by the Constitution as personal property and cannot be taken away.

Mr. Dooley asked for the Chief of Staff's opinion on how to best include and interface with younger Veteran organizations and what VACO is doing to include those organizations. Mr. Riojas replied that VA meets regularly with Veterans organizations to discuss legislative proposals and ways to better represent and serve Veterans. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of American and other OIF/OEF organizations are invited to these meetings. VA does not have the resources to validate the credentials of all of the non-profit programs that serve Veterans. An MSO or VSO would be the best source for exploring ways of engaging younger Veterans organizations.

Mr. Kilgore asked if Mr. Riojas was aware of any issue that arose from Town Hall meetings to the VA leadership. Mr. Riojas responded that most of the topics discussed are on local matters, but VA is looking for trends that can be extracted to implement operational or strategic changes.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed.)

**Parke Board Update:** Chris Slawinski, Fleet Reserve Association/Parke Memorial Fund Board, provided this update to the NEC for informational purposes only. Mr. Slawinski addressed the question about whether the Board can pay for a recipient's travel or other expenses related to receiving the award. Because the Parke Board is not a fund but a 501(c)(3) board with certain designations for contributions, their bylaws prohibit them from being able to pay for anything other than audits and the plaque.

The 2013 audit has been concluded and preparations are being made now for the 2014 audit. A couple scholarships have aged out, which means that scholarships being handed out now will increase from \$30,000 to \$35,000. Donations this year have increased from \$17,720 to \$18,008 for total assets of \$1,020,259. Securities have shown a steady growth in the six years that Mr. Slawinski has been on the Board. When the account changed

hands from Wachovia to Wells Fargo, it began incurring a monthly fee. Mr. Slawinski will be contacting Wells Fargo to get the account classification changed.

**VAVS Program Update:** Mrs. Clark, asked the EC the question “If you could waive a magic wand to make one thing happen in the VA, what would that be?” Mr. Kilgore responded that he would like to see volunteers processed more quickly. Mr. Turner added that VACO should disseminate best practices for onboarding. Mr. Franz commented on the difficulty Representatives/Deputy Representatives have in getting recruitment and marketing materials. Mr. Turner suggested creating a bulletin board or dashboard that displays all of the opportunities available within each VA and their wish lists. Mr. Dooley responded that not every Chief has access to their VA facility’s website for the purpose of placing photos, volunteer recognition items, and wish lists on the site. He stated the EC might consider a recommendation that all VAVS Program Managers have access so that they can provide useful information on their own websites. Mr. Turner suggested prioritizing youth volunteerism. Patty Davis, National Representative, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary suggested reviewing and standardizing driver requirements.

Mrs. Clark introduced Kevin Stanford and Norman Sealy who are serving on detail in the VSO Liaison position. She spoke about her guiding principles of leadership, collaboration, and impact, and discussed the importance of being able to speak the language of leadership to VA at all levels. As volunteerism becomes even more critical to the VA, it is essential that Representatives/Deputy Representatives and VAVS staff be provided with training to be as successful and respected as they should be. Mrs. Clark has been working diligently to ensure that VAVS and the NAC are the first things that come to mind when someone at the VA is looking for trusted partners.

The President has issued a Presidential Memorandum for federal agencies to enhance their utilization of national service members in order to increase civic engagement, encourage young people to consider public service as a career, and solve some of the problems that public service organizations seek to meet. An interagency task force was established and, as an agency with one of the largest volunteer components, they rely heavily on VA’s knowledge and experience. VAVS will be leading an internal VA-wide working group to address the President’s goals and prepare a report for the White House. Ms. Diehl discussed what she has witnessed as a member of the working group and the enthusiasm from other departments that have never utilized volunteer organizations in support of their service programs. She encouraged EC Members to explore ways of getting their organization involved to augment the President’s initiative. Mrs. Clark noted that the Corporation for National Community Service is partnering with the White House on this initiative. This may lead to opportunities for service organizations to receive grants in exchange for placing AmeriCorps or Senior Corps workers in VA facilities.

With the drawdown of troops from Afghanistan, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center has experienced a declining inpatient population. Representatives from Walter Reed approached VAVS about how its donors and volunteer organizations can continue

their service to Veterans through VA programs. The VA will begin hosting half of the biannual Benevolent Summit meetings with Walter Reed's community groups to showcase the VAVS program and the services that are available for their organizations at the VA. Many of the donors and organizations are not currently engaged with VA.

The Veterans Employment Service Office has developed an internship program in collaboration with DoD for Military Members nearing the end of their active service. The program provides an opportunity for a one-year internship, paid for by DoD, that brings Veterans into VA facilities across the country.

Ms. Feeser discussed the General Post Funds determination. The Under Secretary for Health has signed a memorandum to override a technicality in VA policy. VA facilities can now fully accept donations to support homeless Veterans, Stand Downs, transportation, personal comfort items, etc. The Office of Finance is expected to rescind their policies on the issue.

Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, VACO, updated the EC on the status of the Voluntary Service System (VSS). Enhancements to VSS are on the funding list for fiscal year (FY) 2015 and FY 2016 for \$2 million each year; FY 2015 funding has already been awarded. The Business Requirements Document has been signed and staff has been working with a project manager to create a Requirements Specification Document to further detail system needs and to determine how to best use the funds. Acquiring the capability to create reports from any data that exists in the system is a priority among the items they would like to see improved. Ms. Hoover has reached out to the field for input and asked the EC to send her any of their suggestions. Work is also being done to integrate VSS into the Veterans Point of Service (VPS) kiosks so that volunteers can sign in at multiple locations throughout the hospital and at satellite clinics.

Mrs. Munnelly addressed an issue that arose concerning the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) reporting hours uniformly across the country. NCA has an intern program providing new Directors and Assistant Directors intense training before going out into the field. As part of the program, they are required to select projects to focus on and see through. One project was to be an agent to improve their VAVS program. NCA contacted Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Munnelly and they met to discuss ideas on recruitment and orientation. They are working on collecting hours and making sure those hours are getting to the Chiefs of the facilities to be counted. They have been connected with the Chiefs in their areas to work with them on how to enhance their VAVS program.

Mrs. Clark continues to prioritize leadership training for VAVS staff and Representatives/Deputy Representatives. She shared some of the resources that she intends to use to augment the "VAVS Academy" on topics such as risk management, HR practices, and setting up volunteer programs.

Mr. Rose commented on community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) not reporting hours and not utilizing available volunteers. Mrs. Clark responded that VISN Chiefs need to be addressing these issues at the individual stations and that this is an area where



VISN Liaisons in the field can be very useful. If CBOCs do not have assignments, they should be creating them. Capturing hours at kiosks will also help improve reporting.

Mr. Franz complimented Mrs. Clark and her staff for increased utilization of online resources.

Mrs. Clark concluded her update by urging organizations to resolve issues at the lowest level possible. When an issue is brought to General Counsel at Central Office for guidance, it becomes a policy determination for every VA across the country.

**NAC SOP Revisions:** Patricia “Pat” Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary, reported that there were no SOP revisions to be considered. She added that if a VAVS-NAC Executive Board is going to be created, it will need a SOP. Mr. Dooley said that he would provide her with the information needed to develop one.

**Suggestions for Workshop and Plenary Sessions for the 2015 NAC Meeting:** Mrs. Clark said that she would like to include more leadership training in future NAC meetings. Ms. Diehl suggested several topics to consider including program management, creating effective promotional products, attracting nontraditional volunteer donor streams, student volunteer programs, and engaging VA employees as volunteers. Mr. Franz was very fond of the history of VA at the previous meeting. Mrs. Clark stated 2015 will be the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first VA hospital and Darlene Richardson, VA Historian, is very excited to present at the next meeting. Mr. Franz also suggested addressing how to capture hours at National Cemeteries and Homes. Ms. Kranzow suggested providing an opportunity for Representatives/Deputy Representatives to share ideas on what they have found works. Mr. Dooley suggested a speed dating format to accomplish this. Colonel Gallina suggested training on preparing nomination packages. Ms. Hatch suggested workshops designed just for staff.

**Other Business:** Mr. Kilgore opened the meeting for Members to bring up any topics that they wished.

Mr. Turner commented on inconsistencies among VA facilities in acknowledging donations. He said that there should be a process for letting people know that their donations were received and put to use as it is intended. Mrs. Clark responded that this is an issue where local policy does not apply; VAVS has a standard that donations are acknowledged in a timely way.

Mr. Turner brought up the need to educate VAs on policies relating to religious observances and activities. Mrs. Clark replied that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion has looked into the policies and is developing guidance that says the VA will honor the religious freedoms of Veterans. In the meantime, she has asked Chiefs to work with the Chaplains to determine where to hold religious festivities so that religious freedoms are not limited or forced upon anyone against their will. Dawn Heatwole, National Representative, The Salvation Army, has heard from her Reps that they have been instructed not to pray with patients or guests even when requested to do so by the

Veteran. Ms. Brown added that an incident had recently occurred at the New Mexico VA facility wherein the Chaplains Service prevented a volunteer from praying with a patient. Mr. Dooley suggested The Salvation Army create a recommendation on this issue to present to the NAC for consideration. Colonel Gallina responded that any recommendation on the issue should be a request for clarification regarding the policies on religious observance, governance of chapels, and attendant activities.

Before adjourning for the day, new EC Members were given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

(Recess.)

**Thursday, October 23, 2014 – 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

Recommendations: Mr. Ron Rolfes, Jr., National Representative, Forty and Eight, reported that Recommendations Subcommittee decided not to move forward on a recommendation concerning absences at meetings. He presented two recommendations from the Recommendations subcommittee for EC approval.

- Recommendation: The Members of the NAC EC recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs either change or amend the current General Post Funds Policy to Non-Appropriated Funds or seek a special code therein to allow VA Facilities the latitude to receive and utilize all donations for their intended purpose.

Terrance “Shorty” Lyons, National Representative, Military Order of the Cootie, made a motion to accept the recommendation and to forward to the NAC; the motion was seconded by Ms. Davis. **The motion carried.**

- Recommendation: The Members of the NAC EC recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs add VA Facilities as part of the Combined Federal Campaign.

Mr. Turner made a motion to accept the recommendation and to forward it on to the NAC; the motion was seconded by Mr. Lyons. Mr. Kilgore expressed his belief that the only way a local VAVS office could receive any CFC funding would be through a 501(c)(3) organization like VAVS Partners. Handling small, specified donations would be very cumbersome for VAVS Partners. **The motion did not carry.**

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Kilgore provided copies of the of the previous male and female NAC Volunteer of the Year Award packages in order to give EC members an idea of what the review committee hopes to see when reviewing the

nominations. He briefly reviewed the criteria for submissions and noted that the sponsoring organization would be asked to pay the travel for the winner to attend the NAC and receive the award if they are able. Many organizations cannot afford this or do not have a structure in place whereby they are able to pay for travel. In these cases, VACO or the volunteer's local facility will cover the travel expenses to the NAC. In the event funding is not available, the award will be presented locally.

Recruitment: Colonel Gallina reported on the continuing trend of a declining number of logged hours, which have been decreasing at a slower rate than previous years. Total number of Regularly Scheduled (RS) and Occasional (OCC) logged hours for FY2014 was 11,126,202, down 672,030 from FY2013. There were 76,391 RS volunteers logging hours. Policies are getting better and several facilities have made dramatic improvements in their onboarding process. Coordination between local facilities and VAVS staff needs to continue to focus on streamlining procedures. There is still a combination of factors affecting the numbers, including economic considerations and a lack of commitment to recruitment and retention of volunteers. Having a strong recruitment committee at each facility is a must.

Colonel Gallina highlighted five recruitment tips:

- Develop and maintain organization Representative and Deputy Representative Training Brief;
- Continuously coordinate with VAVS Chiefs to reconcile with local VAMC records of certified Representatives;
- Review and update recruitment materials with special focus given to intergenerational recruiting;
- Review all quarterly reports for Representative and Deputy Representative attendance; replace nonperformers;
- Review AJRs for up/down trends in number of RS/OCC volunteers and hours; cash/non-cash donations.

Colonel Gallina will be updating the Recruitment Strategy and Tactics which include a section on targeting OIF/OEF, youth/teen, recently retired, and older seniors. This will be published in time for the next NAC Annual Meeting. He emphasized the need to recruit and retain younger volunteers. Representatives and Deputy Representative are critical to the retention component by ensuring the volunteers have meaningful assignments with positive feedback, there are opportunities for personal growth, volunteers are treated with respect, and there are flexible assignments. In order to improve retention, Colonel Gallina would like to see more focus on recognition over the next year, including providing letters of recommendation for volunteers. He concluded his report by reviewing the key VA programs that offer RS and OCC volunteer/donation opportunities.

Ms. Hoover said that she is able to provide a listing of nationwide membership and attendance reports as well as a list of an organization's Representative and Deputy Representatives as often as they are needed. The VS-26 form should be requested from

VA facilities and Central Office should be cc'd on emails to facilities that are consistently non-responsive.

**Membership:** Mr. Turner presented the potential changes to the NAC Organization Membership list. United Daughters of the Confederacy would be elevated to a Service Member; Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. and Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. would be moved to Associate Service Members; Catholic War Veterans Ladies' Auxiliary, National Ladies Auxiliary of Jewish War Vets, and Women's Army Corps Veterans Association would potentially be dropped from the NAC if they cannot bring up the number of facilities in which they are active. He asked that VACO issue letters of caution to the organizations in danger of changing or losing their membership status alerting them of their potential status change. Mr. Turner will be reaching out to a number of organizations to let them know of their current status and discuss their plans for remaining members of the NAC and plans to report back to the Committee at the spring EC meeting. Some of the women's organizations are experiencing a decline in membership as more female Veterans are choosing to join organizations comprised of men and women that have served.

**Review of FY 2014 Data:** Mrs. Clark, presented a report on NAC Member Organization activity for FY2014. American Red Cross, Knights of Columbus, Fleet Reserve, and National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution saw increases in every category of volunteer activity for FY2014. Recruitment efforts need to be intentional; they require operational planning and management. EC Members were urged to think more broadly about their responsibilities as Representatives and Deputy Representatives, even beyond their own organizations, to provide further outreach for the VAVS program overall. Job skills and training that are available to volunteers need to be better communicated. A VA facility in Atlanta is utilizing an outside organization of engineers that come in to help manage the youth volunteer program and act as career mentors. Mrs. Clark highlighted some non-traditional service projects taking place around the country that are successfully attracting youth volunteers.

Ms. Hoover commented that the report may contain discrepancies because facilities have not coded Representatives and Deputy Representatives correctly or because volunteers have been auto-terminated from VSS after a year of not logging hours.

Colonel Gallina commented on the Representatives and Deputy Representatives being decertified because they have missed three meetings in a row. He recommended paying close attention to the consecutive absences at quarterly meetings. Representatives and Deputy Representatives that have not attended a meeting in nine months will not have information critical to performing their duties.

### **New Business:**

**EC Committee Appointments:** Mrs. Clark discussed the NAC Service Member Organization eligibility for EC Membership. Eight Members have terms ending December 31, 2014. She asked for input on what criteria EC Members would like to see

when eligible Service Member Organizations are being considered. Mr. Turner commented that EC Members need to be actively participating either on committees or providing suggestions to the committees. Mrs. Clark polled the Service Member Organizations whose terms are expiring as to whether they were interested in renewing their membership. All of them wanted to stay on the EC. Colonel Gallina suggested retaining the current organizations and that 70 or more hospitals is a good marker for contributions. Mrs. Munnelly presented a suggestion that came out of the last NAC meeting that at least one slot on the EC be reserved for smaller organizations because of the unique perspective they bring. Mr. Kilgore asked for guidance on whether organizations not on the EC can be included as committee members.

Mr. Kilgore made a recommendation to create an ad hoc committee called the NAC-VAVS Field Committee, with an expiration date of its duties being April 25, 2015. Colonel Gallina, Edward Lilley, and Christi Hillman were appointed to serve on the committee. Mr. Rolfes made a motion to accept the recommendation; the motion was seconded by Mr. Franz. **The motion carried.** Joe Dooley, Anna Diehl, and Stephanie Burns were proposed as the potential slate of VAVS representatives.

Subcommittee Appointments: Mr. Kilgore made the following subcommittee appointments:

- George Braatz, Masonic Service Association of North America, to serve as Chair of the Recommendation subcommittee;
- John Kleindienst, Disabled American Veterans, and Ed Rose, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., will serve as members of the Recommendation subcommittee;
- Stewart Israel, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, will serve as a member of the Membership subcommittee.

Vice Chair Appointment: Mr. Kilgore made a recommendation to appoint Mr. Rolfes as Vice Chair of the EC. Mr. Turner, made a motion to accept the recommendation; the motion was seconded by Colonel Gallina. **The motion carried.**

**Additional New Business:** Mr. Turner requested an update on the status of the recommendation concerning criteria for new organizations hoping to join the NAC. Mrs. Clark responded that the Office of Public-Private Partnership is developing policies on how to identify those organizations. She will distribute the policies to the NAC once they are finalized. Colonel Gallina said that he will be very disappointed if the policy is not issued in the next six months or if it does not reflect the recommended criteria derived from collaborations between VAVS Central Office, the EC, and the Office of the General Counsel. It is a critical issue because the NAC was asked not to add any new members until the policy has been issued. Mrs. Munnelly said that VAVS did provide the recommendation to the Office of Public-Private Partnership when they were considering their policy. Mr. Kilgore commented that alternate routes to getting things moving can be very effective when the normal processes are not achieving results. Mrs. Clark will be inviting the Director of the Office of Public-Private Partnership to attend the NAC Annual Meeting.

Mr. Turner encouraged members to invite organization leadership to the NAC Annual Meeting. It is great exposure and a way to elevate the VAVS program to the national level for them to see the work that goes on.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.